

that the project maintains the irreplaceable biological values of the area.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) –

The USFWS provides realty oversight and assistance by acquiring and performing legal document review, as well as, providing legal advice. Additionally, the USFWS works with both TNC and Fort Carson to ensure biological objectives are met. The USFWS will be an integral partner in the development of the management plan, once the conservation easement is signed.

Benefits of the Fort Carson ACUB

Fort Carson ACUB efforts are beneficial on many fronts. From a wildlife perspective, the ACUB land provides excellent habitat for the mountain plover, a species with potential for future federal listing, and for the black-tailed prairie dog, a species categorized by the USFWS as warranted, but precluded.

Fort Carson contains approximately 137,000 acres of managed native plant communities representative of the Central Short Grass Prairie Eco-Region, which includes short grass prairie, pinyon/juniper woodland, riparian communities, canyon systems and other ecological communities. Fort Carson and TNC will realize a substantial conservation benefit by protecting large tracts contiguous or in close proximity to, an existing large core area of quality habitat.

By creating external buffers on the southern and western boundaries of Fort Carson from the rapidly growing communities of Pueblo West and Penrose, the Army will be able to protect and sustain current training capabilities

at its Multi-Purpose Range Complex (MPRC), a large live fire range and at an Air National Guard bombing range on Fort Carson near the southern boundary.

The easement will also reduce the potential of future land use conflicts that could adversely impact mission accomplishment.



Realistic long-range Army training requires the availability of range lands unimpeded by encroachment.

The Future...

Encroachment is a growing concern for Army installations across the country. Fort Carson's ACUB efforts will pay off in years to come by pre-empting encroachment now before rapidly approaching development has already impacted the Army's ability to train.

An over arching additional benefit of the ACUB is that the program fosters the collaborative partnerships to better manage ecosystems on a regional scale in the future.

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The first phase of ACUB land Fort Carson is set to purchase includes 30,000 acres along the southern boundary of the Installation.

The Fort Carson Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) Project

Fort Carson and the Piñon Canyon Maneuver Site (PCMS) in Colorado comprise nearly 375,000 acres. They serve as major military training facilities for the 7th Infantry Division, the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, the 10th Special Forces Group, the 43rd Area Support Group and the 3rd Brigade of the 4th Infantry Division. Fort Carson supports an Air Force airburst range, numerous branches of the National Guard and reserve components of the Army, Navy and Marine Corps.

Fort Carson's Directorate of Environmental Compliance and Management (DECAM) integrates natural and cultural resources management with the Installation's military training mission. These comprehensive efforts include watershed management and reclamation, wetlands protection, forestry, fisheries, wildlife

education, recreational management and cultural resource protection.

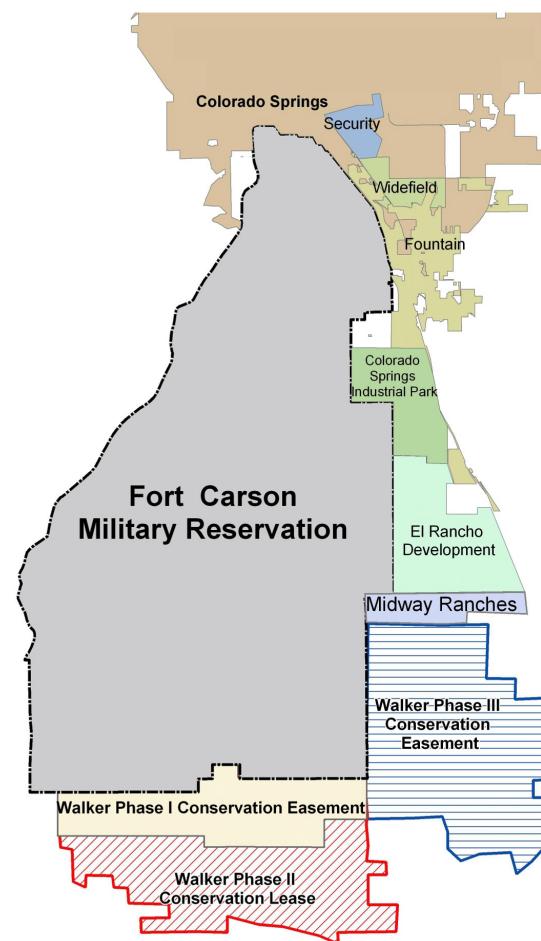
Fort Carson Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) Background

Fort Carson has developed a strategy to deal comprehensively with physical encroachment and environmental regulatory issues at Fort Carson. The goal of the ACUB program is to enhance the military use of Department of Defense's (DoD's) primary military training areas in Colorado through protection of properties adjacent to Fort Carson boundaries. These properties have been identified as having high conservation value and a high probability for current and future encroachment from development along Installation boundaries. The ACUB strategy entails working to encumber upward of 30,000 to 60,000 acres of private lands bordering the Installation. The encumbrance will ultimately safeguard Fort Carson from encroachment and enable implementation of conservation management strategies that deal with potential regulatory impacts at a multi-species, multi-issue scale.

The ACUB project consists of a combination of conservation leases and an easement on the ~60,000 acre Walker Ranch's, which border Fort Carson for a cumulative distance of 20 miles. There are three phases to the project:

Phase I: In the first phase, Fort Carson, in partnership with The Nature Conservancy (TNC), implemented a 2-3 year interim conservation lease on 14,200 acres of the buffer land. The lease was implemented in February 2003.

Phase II: Fort Carson, in partnership with Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and TNC, will implement a permanent conservation easement on the 14,200 acres of buffered land. There will also be a companion grazing and conservation lease on top of the easement on an additional 16,000 acres, with a right of first refusal for acquisition of the entire property. The additional conservation lease provides the ability to actively manage the property to offset potential regulatory issues.



The mountain plover is one of the sensitive species inhabiting Fort Carson lands that benefits from land being set aside under the ACUB.

Phase III: Pursue a conservation easement for ~ 20,000 acres on the southeast boundary of Fort Carson.

Primary ACUB Partners

U.S. Army – The lease and eventual purchase of development rights provides a buffer for ranges and firing points. The Army Environmental Center (AEC) coordinates, reviews documents and provides professional/technical advice and assistance during the lease and easement process. Fort Carson is the primary partner and beneficiary of the lease and subsequent easement acquisition.

TNC – TNC holds the lease and easement and negotiates the requirements of all partners, including Fort Carson and landowners. The Conservancy is an excellent partner to hold a conservation easement because the organization possesses both the experience in completing conservation easement transactions and the conservation biology expertise to ensure